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Preparatory Committee for the Special Session of the General Assembly on the Implementation of the Outcome of the World Summit for Social Development and Further Initiatives
First session
New York, 17–28 May 1999
Items 3 and 4 of the provisional agenda*
Preliminary review and appraisal of the implementation of the outcome of the World Summit for Social Development
Consideration of further actions and initiatives to implement the commitments made at the Summit

Contributions from relevant organs, funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system

Note by the Secretariat

Addendum

Contribution from the United Nations Environment Programme

The Secretariat circulates herewith for the information of the Preparatory Committee the attached report of the United Nations Environment Programme, which is available in English only.

* A/AC.253/5.

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Annex

UNEP input to the preparation of the report on the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration and Programme of Action: Social Development Summit

1. In September 21-25, UNFPA, UNEP and IUCN co-organized an International Workshop in Gland, Switzerland, on Interlinkages between Population, Poverty and the Environment (PPE). It reviewed conceptual and operational work in regard to PPE linkages, including tools and methodologies to respond to observed PPE linkages and agreed on conclusions and follow-up actions. UNFPA and UNEP plan to extend collaboration in this area to provide information, analysis, guidance and assistance for policy development and programming.

2. In collaboration with the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD), UNU, UNDP, and UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), UNEP co-organized, and participated in, the Global Forum on Regional Development Policy on 2-4 December 1998 in Nagoya, Japan. UNEP's substantive contribution to the Global Forum was a policy paper entitled, "Poverty Reduction, Environmental Management and Regional Development: A Synthesis", which addressed the need for, and reviewed the experience in and the means of, integrating considerations of poverty reduction and environmental and natural resource management into spatial and regional development policy and planning. The proceedings of the Global Forum are expected to be published under UNCRD auspices. UNCRD and UNEP look forward to collaborating in developing information, analysis, advisory services and training in this field. The focus of this work will be on achieving synergy in action for poverty reduction and natural resource and environmental management in geographic regions at sub-national levels.

3. UNEP is engaged in developing environmental assessments using Geographic Information Systems, in conjunction with modern information technology, which, inter alia, seek to portray poverty-environment linkages. A recent pilot study, which UNEP carried out in collaboration with the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), presents GIS-based mappings involving selected human development indicators (e.g. child mortality, adult female literacy, primary school enrolment, children with stunted growth) and population density, in relation to marginal or degraded land in various agro-climatic zones in West Africa. The joint CGIAR/UNEP publication was titled, "Mapping Indicators of Poverty in West Africa". UNEP plans to continue work in this area and to broaden inter-agency collaboration to relate such integrated mappings to other initiatives in mapping aspects of poverty (e.g. vulnerability to food insecurity) in the United Nations system. The idea behind this work to provide information support to decisionmakers and programme developers for poverty reduction and natural resource and environmental management.

4. Desertification, i.e. land degradation occurring in the arid, semi-arid and dry subhumid areas, which affects more than one billion people, is directly related to poverty. To provide authentic information on and to promote awareness of the nature, scope, significance, geographic distribution and climatic correspondence of desertification, its causes and effects, its relationship to biodiversity loss and climate change, and the policies and measures needed to combat it, UNEP published the Second Edition of World Desertification Atlas in 1997. This scientific publication includes consideration of the relationship between poverty and land degradation, and case studies from Mexico, Australia, Northwestern China and Northern Senegal which seek to elucidate it and address it. UNEP and IFAD have a joint programme to recognize community-level successful efforts aimed at combatting land degradation and improving living standards of affected people. Information abstracts of such community level programmes are published and disseminated jointly by IFAD and UNEP to promote replication of such initiatives.

5. The United Nations systemwide Special Initiative on Africa includes the "Equitable and Sustainable Use of Freshwater Resources", and the "fair share" approach to water resource management, among its priorities. The Special Initiative on Africa programme focuses primarily on changes in water policies, institutions and laws for bringing the poor majority into the mainstream of the sustainable water development agenda for Africa. UNEP co-chairs, with World Bank and World Meteorological Organization, the Water Working Group of the Initiative. A project proposal to put into practice the "fair share" approach is under development, in collaboration with the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

6. Following the Habitat-sponsored Cape Town consultation (1997) on "Partnership in the Water Sector for Cities of Africa", UNCHS and UNEP have launched an initiative to support provision of adequate access to drinking water and sanitation to urban populations living in poverty in Africa. The regional initiative is being developed and implemented within the framework of the United Nations Systemwide Special Initiative for Africa. Activities in selected African countries, funded by the United Nations Fund for International Partnership (UNFIP), seek to strengthen the capacities in African countries for integrated urban water management at city and river basin levels. UNEP-UNCHS cooperation also seeks to link local operational experience with global normative work in regard to sustainable freshwater management and urban development.

7. UNEP has been an active member of the ACC Network on Rural Development and Food Security, and contributed in May 1998 to the Network (which, inter alia, connects policymakers and analysts with field level action action) policy and programme review and analysis in regard to "Natural Resource and Environmental Management for Food Security". UNEP's contribution was published and disseminated on the Network's Internet homepage, and was also disseminated at the 24th meeting of Committee on World Food Security held in June 1998 when it reviewed the implementation of the Plan of Action of the World Food Summit.

8. UNEP participated actively in the Regional intergovernmental conferences held in Latin America and the Caribbean (April 1997), and in Asia and the Pacific (November 1997), under the auspices of ECLAC and ESCAP, respectively, to foster an integrated approach to implementing the programmes of action of United Nations global conferences in the fields of social development and environment. UNEP has striven to promote policy and programmatic synergies and efficiencies that might be achieved by way of coordinating and integrating action for natural resource and environmental management, food security, poverty reduction, gender equity and equality, and broad-based participation in the benefits of development.